

WASHINGTON, SUNDAY, JUNE 29, 1902.

DAUGHTERS OF CUBA WHO SOUGHT KNOWLEDGE IN OUR SCHOOLS

Charming Young Women from the Infant Republic Who Came to This Country to Be Trained to Teach in Their Own Schools--Uncommonly Bright and Energetic, and Lacking None of the Winsomeness of the Latin Races.

A LITTLE over two weeks ago the American Normal School at New Paltz, N. Y., for training Cuban women to teach in the public schools of their native country, closed the first year of its actual history as an institution amid most auspicious circumstances. The institution is unique in the very character of the work at which it aims. Through it a wonderful amount of good is expected to be accomplished in the matter of extending and perfecting the educational system of the republic of Cuba.

The pupils themselves of the New Paltz school are a remarkable class of young ladies. They are uncommonly bright and energetic, with standards of honesty and ideals peculiar to their native land. In them none of the winsomeness of the Latin races is lacking, and they possess a charm which is quite as refreshing as it is unusual.

The majority of the students have returned to their homes in the island with their chaperons. Their return was made under conditions very different from those existing when they sailed to America, in September, for the most sanguine did not then hope for such a speedy independence for their beloved island. Since the inauguration of the republic of Cuba they have been counting the days until homeward bound. Many regretted not having witnessed the formal inauguration of General Palma.

Missed Their First Inauguration.

"He is our first president," sighed one, "and there can never be only one first president; and to think we were so far away from home and could not see him inaugurated!"

A number of the Cuban students will remain in this country during the vacation, their families having come over and settled here since the school opened. Several will continue to study during the summer at Harvard. All who sail for Cuba this week expect to return to their studies in September, together with thirty additional students, as stipulated in the Government contract. Of the sixty original students all but three have completed the first year's course. One was sent back on account of ill-health, a second for insubordination, a third because the authorities considered her undesirable. They are thought to have shown that they are intent on making the most of an exceptional opportunity, and quick to note and assimilate not only the best to be encountered in the schoolroom, but in the social life of the quaint old town of New Paltz.

Origin of the Plan.

Prof. Myron L. Scudder, principal of the State Normal School, established more than fifteen years in the picturesque valley of the Wallkill at New Paltz, has carried out the work of training these teachers. The idea of sending Cuban women to this country to be trained here to teach in the public schools of the island originated with Lieut. Matthew Hanna, a West Point graduate, a relative of Senator Hanna, and a member of the United States Commission of Education for Cuba, appointed shortly after General Wood was made Governor. Alexander Fry, who successfully conducted the Cuban excursions last summer to Harvard, and substantially his interest in the cause by marrying one of the Cuban women, contributed signally to the maturing of Lieutenant Hanna's plan. None suspected that he was participating in a small way the dream of Cecil Rhodes.

Paid by Cuba.

When Governor Wood had endorsed the proposition, correspondence was opened with a number of State normal schools throughout the United States. The Cuban government agreed to assume the responsibility of the professional training of the girls qualified to come, and to provide rooms, board and ordinary washing for the sum of \$6 a week for each student, the use of the school equipment to be given by the state. Aside from traveling expenses to and from the island, each student is paid by the Cuban government \$30 for personal expenses. Upon the completion of the course, which covers two years, to each student is guaranteed a position in the Cuban public schools of \$30 a month.

"What guarantee has the Cuban government that the students will keep their contract?" was asked.

"None was exacted. It was presumed

they would pay back the money the government expended," was the reply.

"But if they have no money?"

There was an eloquent shrug of the shoulders.

Marriage Breaks All Contracts.

"Suppose Cupid should step in?" was suggested.

"In Latin countries," explained a knowing senora, "when a woman marries she breaks all contracts."

In considering the government's proposition Principal Scudder submitted to the Cuban Commission an outline of the curriculum of the New Paltz Normal School. The academic training was to be supplemented by a certain amount of domestic science, manual and physical training, for good housewives and home makers no less than for skilled pedagogues. The course met the views of the commission, and so satisfied was Lieutenant Hanna with his first visit to New Paltz that the contract between the authorities of the State of New York and the Cuban government was sealed without visiting State normal schools elsewhere. The contract covers a period of ten years, provided the first year's experiment justifies its maintenance to the State authorities and the Cuban government. In the interval the republic has been instituted, and it remains now for the new government to accept or reject the report that will be submitted shortly.

Deference to Superiors.

The students arrived in groups, the first coming in September, the second in October. All had had more or less educational advantages in Cuba. Some, the daughters of patriots and once

skirts and high heels and turned up their braids to acquire the requisite maturity for examination.

All except one are Roman Catholics, and attend the church of that denomination at New Paltz. The non-Catholic girl came from an evangelical mission at Key West, Fla., and knew little or no English.

As it is the purpose of the Cuban gov-



HORTENZIA DIAZ.

wealthy families, are convent bred, consequently well grounded in languages and good manners. The deference of the Latin races to superiors is shown on entering the Cuban schoolroom at New Paltz. Every student rises to her feet and remains standing until the stranger is seated or has taken leave. Seven on arriving spoke English well, while a number translated it readily and could understand fairly. Those who understood not a word six months ago are able today to follow classes in English. Their progress, the teachers assert, is exceptional. To secure professional training in America they were obliged to pass a special examination conducted by the school authorities of Cuba. In age they were presumed to range from sixteen to twenty-six; seventeen the average. Sixteen is the prescribed limit. Two of the brightest girls confess to have barely turned thirteen and fourteen, respectively—confessions their childish figures, skirts grazing shoe-tops and braids hanging down their backs verify. In their eagerness to equip themselves to meet the new problem the vicissitude of war had forced upon them, they tell with pardonable gusto of how they donned long

erment in this educational experiment not to import into Cuba the system of education approved by the Board of Regents of the State of New York, but rather to adapt and adopt such parts of that system as will graft easily and readily on the present civilization, every precaution is taken to maintain in the daily life of the students the customs and manners of the social life of the Spanish-Americans. To this end the students are divided into three groups, each residing with a chaperon in three separate residences—Riverside Cottage, Van Kuren House, and Stein Hotel—where Mr. Scudder leased and conducts with the assistance of Mrs. Stein for the students' accommodation. The chaperons were selected by the Cuban government, and are Cuban women of culture and social training. They receive a salary of \$60 a month and their expenses. The chaperons are widows, and each endeavors to preserve in her little community the conventionalities of the social life of Cuba, and assist the local priest in looking after their spiritual duties. Several times during the year a Cuban priest has come from Washington to administer the sacraments, but as most of the students now speak and un-

derstand English sufficiently, the local pastor is able, despite his unfamiliarity with Spanish, to hear confessions.

Their Chaperons.

The chaperon of Riverside Cottage, Mrs. Aurelia Landa de Barasa, is well known in the first circles of Havana. Owing to the illness of her mother, Mrs. Barasa will not return to America next year. Mrs. Ricardo P. de Pelligero, the chaperon of the family at the Stein Hotel, and her daughter will spend the vacation in this country. Her charges will return under the chaperonage of the mistress of Van Kuren House, Mrs. Forrest, widow of the brother of Edwin Forrest, the tragedian. A Cuban by birth, Mrs. Forrest resided in this country fifteen years of her married life, to return, upon the death of her husband, to the island, which is now her home. The chaperons accompany their charges to and from the Normal School, sit with them in recitations, and share their outings, either for business or pleasure.

To the boys and girls congregated at New Paltz from various parts of the State this Latin custom of chaperonage appears strange, especially in the sober town of New Paltz, basking in the se-



MARIA T. LARRINGO.



AMERICA AUDRICAIN.



MARIA CRISTINA SOLOLONGO.

curity of two hundred years of Huguenot ancestry and preserving to this hour the solemnity of Sleepy Hollow!

Assimilated Freedom.

Despite the chaperons' faithful fulfillment of the letter of the law and the Cuban girls' dutiful acquiescence, they have unconsciously assimilated not a little of the freedom of American womanhood, and teachers and well-wishers now question its effect upon their home-going.

"I am afraid," said Prof. Scudder, "they will find the restraint of the old life, after the freedom they have enjoyed here, a painful experience." In assuming the responsibility of the experiment, Prof. Scudder had to adapt a course of study for foreign students which should in a year justify its maintenance to the State authorities, but at the same time not retard or interrupt the work of the regular students.

Happily, good fortune favored him in securing the services of two American teachers skilled in the Spanish language and customs. Miss Armstrong, head instructor of the Cuban classes, went to the Argentine Republic under contract with that government to establish normal schools patterned after those of the United States. At that time there were two normal schools in the Argentine Republic. Three times Miss Armstrong returned to this country in quest of American teachers to assist in carrying on the work in South America. Of the thirty normal schools now flourishing in the Argentine Republic, some sixteen were directly or indirectly established by her. Failing

MISS CLARA VENTURA.

health compelled her to return to this country about a year ago, when Prof. Scudder secured her services. Miss Armstrong's assistant is Miss Rosa Dark, a native of Indianapolis, who went to South America in 1885, where she was principal of a woman's training school at Mendoza. A feature is the gratuitous work of Miss Wales, who joined the faculty this spring, giving six hours a day to the classroom, and defraying her personal expenses from her own purse. Miss Wales taught Spanish fifteen years in South America before returning to this country to claim an inheritance.

Recited in Spanish.

There are four classes a day in English. The old district schoolhouse of New Paltz was fitted up for the Cubans. Their text-books are in English, but they recite in Spanish. As they are to teach in their native tongue, the method of teaching is imparted to them in that language.

"They are exceptionally bright, energetic, and ambitious," said Miss Armstrong. "They have only one thought, to return to their own country well equipped teachers. They are learning the English language ten times more rapidly than are the American students here the Spanish. I teach both, and have no hesitancy in making the assertion."

The Cubans are much taken with physical culture, and it is to them the most novel feature in American training. In basketball their team reached

KISSES TO BECOME CONTRABAND

UNLESS all signs fail, sweethearts, married couples, and the residents of the National Capital in general are to be stringently deprived of the pleasure of taking affectionate partings in railway stations so far as hugging and kissing are concerned.

A movement which was inaugurated in Jersey City, N. J., and which is surely and swiftly spreading to other large cities of the country, has for its object the complete discarding of all oscillatory demonstrations on the part of passengers and their friends or relatives in railroad stations. And judging from innumerable signs the conclusion must be drawn that before long bussing will be prohibited in the depots of the National Capital as well as elsewhere.

"All trainmen, gatemen and ticket examiners will stop all persons from exchanging kisses upon the arrival and departure of trains in this station. This order must be rigidly enforced."

The above sign is what started the trouble at the Pennsylvania railway station in Jersey City, N. J.

It was posted by P. P. A. Abercrombie, Eastern superintendent of the Pennsylvania lines, and all trainmen, gatemen, and ticket examiners now keep a keen lookout for symptoms of osculation.

If an affectionate couple, holding hands, nears a train a man watches very closely. If there is a twitching of the muscles of the mouth that would indicate a puckering of the lips the watchful employee runs forward and bars the people before the pent-up bliss finds vent.

"If you want to kiss you will please step outside of the station," is the way the kiss detector puts it when he pulls the osculators apart.

The move was started in order to prevent delay of trains. Officials complain that crowds gather at the trains darkening effects. Gas, turned low, and block the way with their demon-

Reveled in the Freedom Accorded Them, Which Was Totally Different from Their Home Life--Took Great Delight in Physical Culture and Entered the Sports with Great Spirit.

such skill that they entered contest, with a winning chance. "I like," said one of the girls, "nothing better in American instruction than exercise of the body. When I go home this summer I teach it to my compatriots. I know not whether they like it. I want much to see."

First Sight of Snow.

Contrary to expectations the American climate agreed with them, and there was little or no illness. Snow, which many saw for the first time, gave unbounded delight. Last they should suffer from exposure, school was suspended during a snowstorm. The more venturesome spent the enforced holiday snow-balling their companions. So great was the charm of this climate novelty that they had their pictures taken in snowstorms to send home to their friends. The evening preceding the inauguration of the Cuban President they improvised and costumed without assistance from the faculty, and gave a series of tableaux, interspersed with native vocal and instrumental music, which greatly pleased their audience.

"My experience with the Cuban girls corroborates that of Mr. Fry," said Prof. Scudder. "I have found them the soul of honor. Before Christmas I loaned them sums amounting to \$600, and at Easter about \$300. I took no security beyond their word. Promptly every penny was paid back. When they return the money I never count it before them. Once when I requested a girl to count the money I had given her before she put it in her purse, she blushed and seemed much confused. Her chaperon explained that she felt much hurt that I should think she had doubted my word. She could not understand our custom, which is unknown in Cuba."

The wisdom of keeping the Cuban students in a community life, while approved by the authorities and observing town-folks, is already questioned by the students themselves. "We have nine hours' class work," said a student, "and when we are in our houses together we talk nothing but Spanish. I would like to see something of the home life of the Americans, and have more opportunity to converse in English."

There are no Cuban male students in the school as yet, but two boys from Porto Rico hold scholarships, and are pursuing the regular course.

strations of affection. For instance, a young woman who is going away for the summer comes down to the train with about a dozen of her sweetest and dearest young woman companions.

They gather about her like bees around a buckwheat patch, and begin to say good-by just before the conductor calls "Aboard!"

Every one of the young women must take a dab at her lips. The conductor dare not pull out without the fair passenger, and the result is that the train leaves a second late, and in these times of fast trains a second is a good deal to lose.

Trainmen aver that women are the worst offenders in this line, as the men usually do their bussing behind closed doors or before they arrive at the station. Lovers usually get their parting osculatory demonstrations over before they get to the train, and the farewell there is usually a very tame affair. Husbands and wives often indulge in little kissing matches, but they more frequently do the job up at home.

But a crowd of women insist on doing the kiss act on brown. They begin by saying good-by about ten times each all around. They will wait until the very last minute to get in the kiss, and as the train pulls out there will follow in the wake a chorus of:

"Be sure and write as soon as you get there."

"I'll take good care of your bird while you are gone."

"Be sure and send me the pattern of that new shirt waist."

"Good-by, good-by, good-by, good-by!"

And all this takes up time, it also takes up space. Trainmen are kept waiting. Luggage smashers are balked in their efforts to get around. And the osculation, although considered very fine by these participating, is looked upon with misgivings by weak stomached individuals like me.

The railway that will get popular at once with the women and the young and love-lorn couples will be the one that will set apart rooms in its stations for kissing. The rooms may be in the depots and on the door have signs reading:

Here the decorations might be in keeping with the occupation. The walls could be papered with flying cupids and room fitted with cozy corners and other darkening effects. Gas, turned low, might be provided to aid matters.